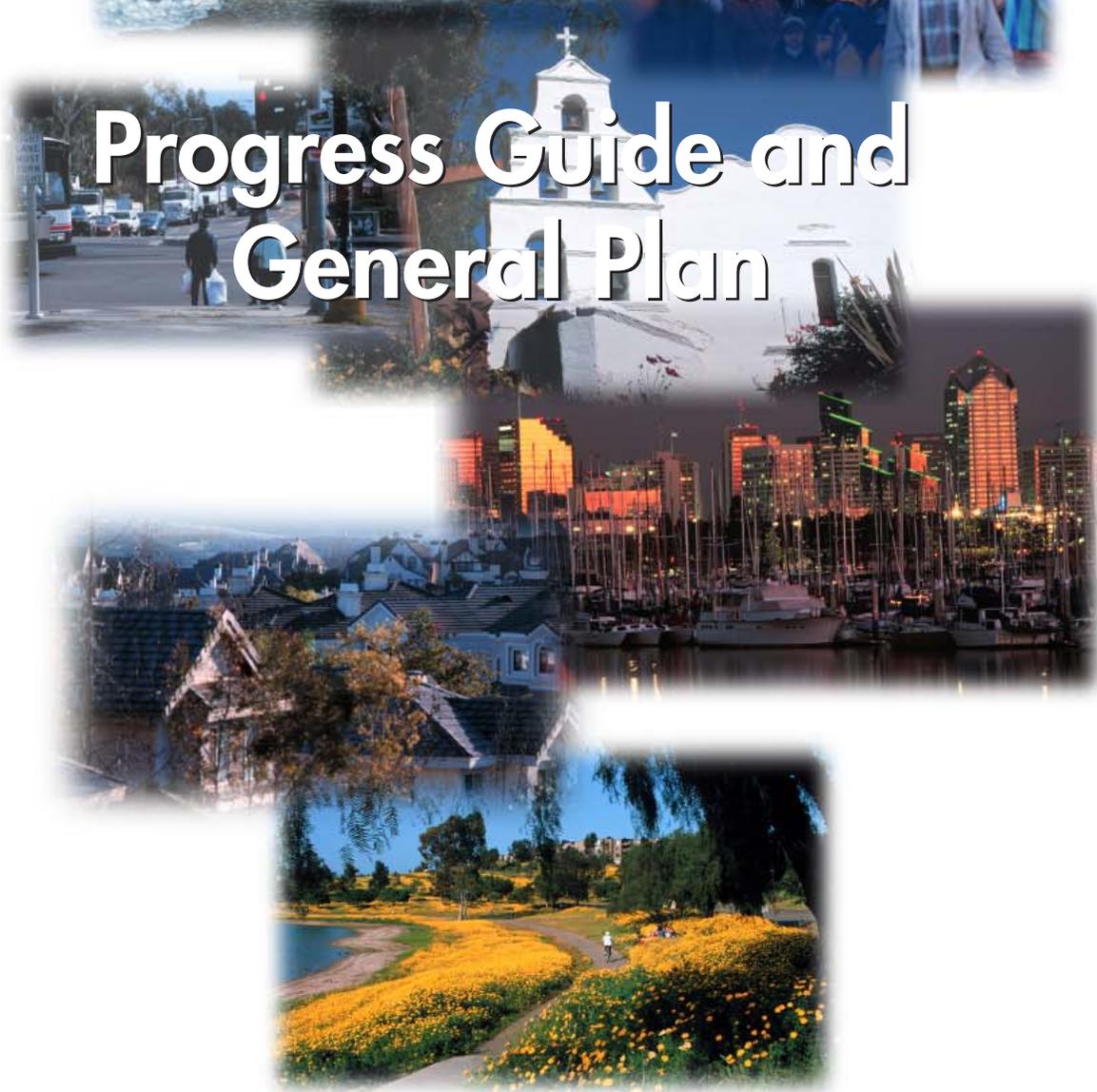




THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



# Progress Guide and General Plan



# ***PROGRESS GUIDE AND GENERAL PLAN***



**Updated and Reprinted, June 1989**



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The following information has been incorporated into this June 2004 posting of this plan:

| <b>Amendment</b>   | <b>Date Approved by Planning Commission</b> | <b>Resolution Number</b> | <b>Date Adopted by City Council</b> | <b>Resolution Number</b>                         |
|--|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Adoption Of General Plan   | February 22, 1979                           | 1725                     | April 1, 1979                       | R-222918   |
| Industrial Element Amended                                       |   |                          | December 15, 1981                   | R-255517   |
| Adoption Of General Plan Map                                     |   |                          | March 8, 1983                       | R-258076   |
| Open Space Preservation And Development Of Sensitive Lands Added |   |                          | December 11, 1984                   | R-262128   |
| Adoption Of Transportation Element And General Plan Map          |   |                          | March 5, 1985                       | R-262664   |
| Phased Development Areas Map Amended                             |   |                          | May 20, 1986                        | R-265758   |
| Phased Development Area Boundaries Ratified                      |   |                          | January 27, 1987                    | R-267565   |
| NAS Miramar West Sitings Approved                                |   |                          | October 21, 1991                    | R-278874   |
| Guidelines For Future Development Added                          |   |                          | October 1, 1992                     | R-276650,<br>R-280786,<br>R-280787 &<br>R-280788 |
| North City Future Urbanizing Area Initiation Criteria Revised    |   |                          | January 18, 1994                    | R-283302   |
| NTC Revisions  |   |                          | February 22, 1994                   | R-283431,<br>R-283432 &<br>R-283446              |
| City Council Approved Redesignation Of Certain Parcels Of Land   |   |                          | January 8, 1996                     | R-286790 &<br>R-286791                           |
| Future Urbanizing Area Amended And Approved                      |   |                          | August 5, 1996                      | R-287748 &<br>R-287749                           |



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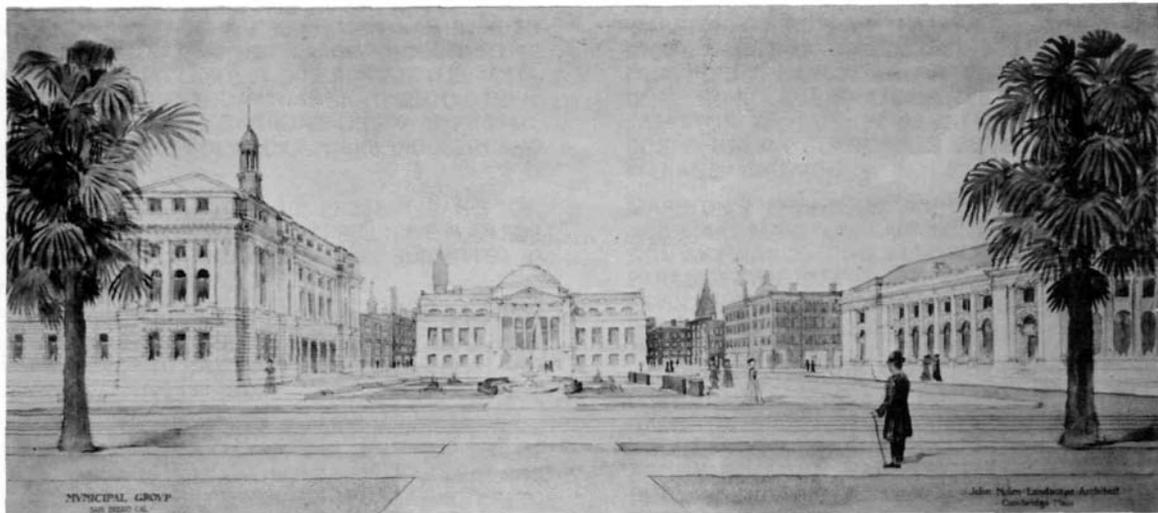
## **PREFACE**

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## Preface

A modern General Plan for the City of San Diego was initially adopted by the Council and ratified by the voters in 1967. Following a comprehensive review over several years, the current *Progress Guide and General Plan* (General Plan) was adopted in 1979. But the first real master plan for San Diego pre-dates these modern efforts by nearly 60 years. John Nolen and his 1908 "San Diego: A Comprehensive Plan for Its Improvement" are clearly the progenitors of planners and plans, respectively, for San Diego.

The following article by Roger Showley, together with excerpts from the original Nolen plan, was originally published in the San Diego Union, January 9, 1983. With the kind permission of the Union, it is reprinted here to provide a historical context for the current General Plan.



## THE NOLEN PLAN

By ROGER SHOWLEY  
Staff Writer, The San Diego Union

No street bears his name, despite his work in plotting where streets should go. No monuments honor him in city parks, though he was the first to map a system of parks in the county.

Though largely forgotten, John Nolen devised the city's first comprehensive plan three-quarters of a century ago, aimed at attracting tourists, accommodating business, and providing a setting for thousands of immigrants in search of a sunbelt lifestyle.

The San Diego that this Cambridge, Mass., landscape architect encountered in 1908 was home to only 35,000 people — not large enough to be ranked in the 100 largest cities in the U.S.; Vista has more residents today than San Diego did then. It was a spur on a railroad line; a bypassed, shallow port; a city devoid of parks, industry and prominence.

Yet, Nolen looked beyond his present. In his 109-page study, "San Diego; A Comprehensive Plan for Its Improvement" — and its sequel submitted 18 years later — he saw the future. "The present city is but the nucleus of the future city," Nolen wrote, "and the citizens of today have an opportunity to rise to the call of a great and fine constructive period."

Pete Wilson invoked Nolen's vision in his farewell address to the city as mayor; "Nolen was right, of course. What he was saying in 1908 was that San Diego must exercise foresight and take action to accommodate its inevitable growth — before it occurred."

John L. Hancock said in his 1964 doctoral thesis, "Nolen came to San Diego on the eve of her metropolitan development and, by virtue of local acceptance of his two plans, the last officially. He is indisputably its modern planner, the man whose planning proceeded upon the assumption that "San Diego is more than an ordinary city; it is the center of a region and lends itself to the requirements of modern decentralized development."

Before Nolen's time, subdividers and speculators were the de facto city planners of the west; they bought the land, laid out the streets, sold off lots to individuals and developers and walked away with profits. However, there was no one to tie the entrepreneurs' dreams together. And the consequence was erratically placed connector streets, sparsely located parks and an unrelenting series of grid-shaped neighborhoods.

As an outgrowth of the 1890s "city beautiful" and 1900s progressive movements, civic leaders came to believe in comprehensive planning as a way to steer growth in a positive way. Planning departments were unknown and urban planning was a new profession.

Nolen paved the way for the integrated planning and zoning efforts taken for granted today. By the time of his death in 1937, Nolen's firm had prepared 467 big and small plans for cities all

over the country. "Mr. Nolen was the dean of the city planning profession in America," the American magazine of art eulogized. San Diego was one of his first challenges.

Comprehensive planning here was born of a desire in 1903 to relocate city hall from Fifth Avenue and G Street to Horton Plaza. George W. Marston, founder of the Marston's department store chain (now a part of the Broadway chain), prompted the Chamber of Commerce to form a civic improvement committee and hire Nolen (Marston covered a \$3,500 deficit in printing costs) to lend some direction to San Diego's unmanaged growth.

Marston's grandson and daughter, Hamilton and Mary Marston, carried on the family tradition by financing the \$12,000 report, "Temporary Paradise?" in 1974 — a study by urban planners Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard of future opportunities for San Diego development.

"In order to lift our eyes and imaginations to the long-term requires a really strong effort," Hamilton Marston said. "I think that is what Nolen in his first and second visits and the Lynch-Appleyard study have contributed. I think the results will be ongoing. Always, our reach is beyond our grasp."

Nolen's recommendations, submitted in March 1908, included grouping public buildings; developing the waterfront into a recreational and transportation center; providing for scattered playgrounds, wide boulevards and avenues; and setting aside public beaches and regional parks. "These recommendations may appear to present a heavy task for a city the size of San Diego," Nolen said in the report's conclusion. "Yet, after careful consideration and a comparison with the programs and achievements of other cities, I believe the proposed undertakings are all of a reasonable nature."

"When they are looked at from the point of view of 25 years hence, so far as that can be brought before the imagination, they will in many respects be considered inadequate. No city regrets its acquisition of parks, but many cities regret their failure to act in time."

Looking back, Harry C. Haelsig, retired city planning director, commented, "It was a little visionary... we didn't have millions of dollars - we had nickels to spend."

The aftermath of the Nolen Plan involved more politics than projects. Short-term economic gain rather than long-term city planning.



- ◆ In 1909, instead of moving to build a new city hall, opera house and other public buildings around a square at Front Street and Broadway. As Nolen proposed (he said Horton Plaza was too small a site), the Chamber of Commerce proposed something else: a world's fair to coincide with the opening of the Panama Canal six years later.
- ◆ In 1911, instead of reserving the bayfront north of E Street to open-space recreation, linked to Balboa Park by a 12-block landscaped promenade, the City Council with \$2 million in voter-approved bonds approved filling in the bay west of Pacific Highway and the construction of Broadway and B Street piers for shipping and commerce.



- ◆ Marston, espousing Nolen's Plans, was defeated for mayor in 1913 and, in his second try in 1917, his opponent, banker-developer Louis J. Wilde, tagged him as "Geranium George" - that is, standing for civic beauty - rather than favoring "smokestacks" - jobs and economic growth. Marston objected but lost. And Wilde presided over a four-year period when World War I brought the Navy, Marines and a solid base to the local economy (the Panama Canal opened, but shipping went to Los Angeles and San Francisco, not San Diego).

Five months after Wilde beat Marston, the year-old planning commission resigned under pressure, and Wilde, inspired by the metropolis to the north, declared, "Los Angeles is full of youth, vision, imagination, optimism, curiosity, boosters and brains. San Diego is full of old tightwads, pessimists, vacillating, visionary dreamers." He left the city in 1921 and died three years later.

Marston, on the other hand, lived 25 years longer to the age of 96, and, through his efforts, the Nolen approach to comprehensive planning remained alive.

By 1921, John L. Bacon, publisher of the old San Diego independent newspaper, had replaced Wilde and returned comprehensive planning to respectability. Nolen, in constant correspondence with Marston, visited the city in January, 1924, saying he was "more anxious than ever" to help shape San Diego's future a second time.

This time the city hired Nolen for \$10,000 to prepare a city, harbor and parks plan. About 1,000 citizens attended a public presentation of the plans in February, 1926. At an American Legion speech, Will Rogers urged, "Now you have a real plan prepared by Nolen. Don't let any prominent citizen get up and talk you out of it."

Council approval came in less than a month on March 8 and Nolen's ideas became the cornerstone of all master planning of the city for 42 years, until voters adopted a new General Plan in 1967.

The second Nolen Plan modified some of the earlier recommendations and added a few new ones. It proposed a civic center on the waterfront, an airport on the mudflats of San Diego Bay. A regional government, a system of freeways and greenbelt parks, subdivision and zoning regulations, historic preservation and capital-improvement budgeting.

His 18 key recommendations were in one stage or another of implementation 10 years later. Nolen did not count on the depression, World War II, development of Tijuana, growth of suburbs and shopping centers, "clean industry" think tanks and the taxpayer revolt. But his principles are so basic that they still lie behind actions in many cases, according to City Planning Director Jack Van Cleave, a veteran of 35 years in the planning department.



Groupings of public buildings - Nolen proposed a harborfront location for a civic center in 1926 and, 12 years later, what is now the County Administration Center opened on Pacific Highway - after four tries at the ballot box and a \$1 million federal depression-era grant.

When the voters rejected a Washington, D.C.-type mall eastward along Cedar Street in the 1940s and 1950s, school, county and city offices were built on scattered sites. But today, major federal (1974), state (1963), county (1961) and city (1964) buildings lie within a three-block radius of Nolen's 1908 civic center site at Broadway and Front Street.

In retrospect, Van Cleave said, it may not have been such a good idea to concentrate public office buildings in one place. "It would have been for a Christmas tree lane, perhaps, but that's about the only activity at night. So, our concept now is to try to make downtown living day and night."



Highways - Haelsig, who began as a city engineer in 1928 and retired in 1964 as planning director, said he based the city's 1931 major street system on Nolen's concepts. State 163 through Balboa Park is one example: widening of Pacific Highway and Mission Valley Road (the precursors district's master plan).



Parks - Nolen foresaw that the city would overtax Balboa Park's recreational resources and proposed a series of regional and neighborhood parks and playgrounds. He designed Presidio Park for George Marston, who donated it to the city in 1937.

Glenn A. Rick, Haelsig's predecessor, planned Mission Bay Park - another Nolen idea - almost single-handedly, Haelsig said, and helped dedicate it in 1949. Old Town, the restored San Diego Mission de Alcalá, Torrey Pines, Anza-Borrego, Cabrillo National Monument, La Jolla Shores, San Clemente Canyon, Coronado's Silver Strand and preserved lagoons in North County were part of Nolen's Plan. Mission Trails Regional Park around Cowles Mountain is but the latest addition, Van Cleave said.



Planning, zoning and regionalism - a year after the 1926 plan's adoption, the City Council passed a comprehensive zoning ordinance, initiated neighborhood planning studies and appropriated \$15,000 for traffic maps. Voters in 1930 voted by a 6-1 margin for a state-county park system and, in 1931, ratified a new city charter that gave the planning commission constitutional authority over public and private projects.

But Van Cleave said planning and zoning of today goes far beyond the three zones and quarter-inch-thick set of regulations first adopted in the 1920s.

"It's one thing to have zoning regulations for a small city if you don't have many people there," he said. "On the other hand, as you get more and more dense and more intensity of land use, you have to have more definitive regulations to guide development so we can all live happily forever more."

Regionalism in Nolen's scheme envisioned close cooperation of south bay cities in a "metropolitan district." Today, the Metropolitan Transit Development Board, San Diego Unified Port District, County Water Authority, Serra Library System, Health Systems Agency, Local Agency Formation Commission and San Diego Association of Governments together can be traced back to Nolen's vision.

Nolen himself did not see his efforts as etched in stone: "The need for any city which would constantly provide for the future is to replan and replan, to readjust, to constantly use art and skill and foresight to remodel existing conditions and to mould and fit for use the new territory about to be invaded."

"A comprehensive and practicable plan," he concluded in the 1908 report, "will take months to work out even on paper and actually begin working out a far-reaching scheme, the result of which, I believe, will surpass our fondest dreams."

Van Cleave said the city's professional planners have enlarged on Nolen's work: "I don't put Nolen up as a god or saint. I think he was a man who had some visionary thoughts about the

future and, hopefully, we have the same thoughts today. We're doing things in the area of planning today that Nolen would never have dreamed of."

But Nolen's dream lives on. The "Temporary Paradise?" study of 1974 boldly called for removal of Lindbergh Field and most military uses from the bay and their replacement with a Venice-type residential inner city; closer cooperation with Mexico in trans-border issues and projects; and preservation of canyons and scarce open spaces.

"It's not going to happen overnight," Van Cleave said, "Looking a century into the future. I think it'll happen."

Sam Hamill, 79, who moved here the year Nolen's first plan was published and went on to help design the County Administration Center on Pacific Highway, said Nolen's historic contribution was a way of thinking about the future.

"He injected an element of grandness. The city had been very small. He approached it on a grand scale. It opened up a greater spirit to thought and context."

## ECHOES OF IMAGINATION

From John Nolen's "San Diego: A Comprehensive Plan for Its Improvement," published in 1908 by the San Diego Chamber of Commerce's Civic Improvement Committee:

*San Diego is indeed unique. Even in Southern California, its situation, climate and scenery make it stand out in permanent attractiveness beyond all other communities.*

*Notwithstanding its advantages..., San Diego is today neither interesting nor beautiful. Its city plan is not thoughtful, but, on the contrary, ignorant and wasteful. Fortunately, the public-spirited men and women of San Diego are preparing to act in time. They realize in general what the city lacks, what it needs and the opportunity and responsibility of the present generation.*



*To beautify a city means to make it perfect — perfect as a city, complete in serving a city's purposes... The plans to improve and adorn the city must therefore take many things into account. They must be broad, and, considering the promise of the city, liberal and courageous. In this connection how difficult it is to bring before the people of a city a vision of what 50 years' growth, even 25, will make not only possible, but necessary.*



*Action must be taken while it is still relatively easy, or it will certainly be costly and probably inadequate. The present, therefore, is a most propitious time to consider in a frank, clear-headed and comprehensive manner the future of San Diego. As never before, it seems now to have the opportunity to lay firm hold of its heritage.*

*Happily, it is still within the power of the people of San Diego to make their city convenient, attractive and beautiful. Each generation has spent too much time in lamenting the errors of the past and has given too little attention to the opportunities of the present.*



*San Diego's opportunity is so open, so apparent and relatively so easy that it seems unnecessary to point further the application. Every phase of civic improvement is within its reach. This is its real formative era. The present city is but the nucleus of the future city, and the citizens of today have an opportunity to rise to the call of a great and fine constructive period.*



*The people of San Diego will do well if they recognize today that the two great central recreation features of the city, now and always, are the City (Balboa) Park of 1,400 acres and the bay front, and that the value of both will be increased many fold if a suitable connecting link, parkway or boulevard can be developed, bringing them into direct and pleasant relation.*



*Each school, each ward, each residence district in San Diego, by nature a play city, should have its playground; and the time to provide them is now before real estate values are prohibitive and before land of suitable character is monopolized for private purposes. The possession of play areas is a necessity of city life, and by obtaining them now San Diego can avoid the heavy penalty of procrastination which New York and other cities have had to pay.*

*In the improvement of established cities, no changes are so difficult, none so important, as those in streets. They are difficult because of the expense and great number of interests involved. But the gains are so decided that a city should face the difficulties with courage and generosity.*



*Few cities in the United States have a more romantic history and situation than San Diego, and it is to be regretted that they have not expressed themselves in the street names. Instead of D Street (now Broadway), Fifth Street (now Fifth Avenue) and similar colorless names, we might honor the discoverer of the bay, the sturdy fathers who established the missions, the pioneers in settling the modern city, the heroines of its romances which have become part of our literature.*

*A system of parks is unquestionably demanded. Such a system can be secured more easily than in any other city I know of...Connect this system of parks by the boulevards and parkways already planned, develop it naturally, simply, harmoniously and then confidently invite comparison with it of any park system in the world... It would give to the citizen health, joy and more abundant life, and to the city itself wealth and enduring fame.*



## **INTRODUCTION**

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## Introduction

This text, together with the attached map, constitutes the General Plan for the City of San Diego. A General Plan for the City of San Diego was initially adopted by the voters in 1967. One of the principal recommendations of the document called for plan review by the Planning Commission and City Council at five-year intervals. Work began on the revision of the General Plan in 1971 with the preparation of an issues report and series of public meetings held throughout the City. Simultaneously, background studies were initiated on each of the elements to be revised. During this same period, the state Legislature passed legislation requiring seven additional mandatory elements. Revision of the General Plan was delayed while the new elements were researched and reports published to meet the deadline for adoption. In 1974, work began again in an effort toward completing the revision and was again delayed because of the growth management study.

Even though San Diegans have had some ten years working experience with a General Plan, some questions will still remain: What is the General Plan? Why was it prepared? What will it do? What is its relationship to community plans? Can it be amended? If so, how?

### The General Plan Defined

In broad terms, the General Plan represents a focusing of planning thought and effort - an attempt to identify and analyze the complex forces, relationships, and dynamics of city growth in order that they can be shaped and directed in accordance with recognized community goals and aspirations. From the standpoint of the citizen - who is, after all, the chief concern of planning - the General Plan may be considered a public document embodying a realistic appraisal of where we are as a city; a careful determination of where we want to go; and a forthright program for getting there.

In legal terms, the General Plan is defined in the state planning and zoning law as " ... a comprehensive, long-term . . . plan for the physical development of the . . . city, and of any land outside its boundaries which . . . bears relation to its planning."\* This plan "shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals."\*\* Additionally, it is provided that the General Plan shall include the following elements:

- **A Land Use Element** which designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space; including agriculture, natural resources, recreation and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The Land Use Element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan. The Land Use Element shall also identify areas covered by the plan which are subject to flooding, and shall be reviewed annually with respect to such areas.

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\* Section 65300 of the Government Code of the state of California.

- **A Circulation Element** consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the Land Use Element of the plan.
- **A Housing Element**, to be developed pursuant to regulations established under Section 41134 of the Health and Safety Code and Title 25, Chapter 6, Subchapter 4 of the Administrative Code, consisting of standards and plans for the improvement of housing and for provision of adequate sites for housing. This element of the plan shall make adequate provision for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community through a Fair Share Allocation Plan.
- **A Conservation Element** for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources. That portion of the Conservation Element including waters shall be developed in coordination with any county-wide water agency and with all district and city agencies which have developed, served, controlled or conserved water for any purpose for the county or city for which the plan is prepared.
- **An Open Space Element** that will make plans for the preservation of open space land for the conservation of natural resources, for the managed production of resources, for outdoor recreation, and for public health and safety.
- **A Seismic Safety Element** consisting of an identification and appraisal of seismic hazards such as susceptibility to surface ruptures from faulting, to ground shaking, to ground failures, or to effects of seismically induced waves such as tsunamis and seiches. The Seismic Safety Element shall also include an appraisal of mudslides, landslides, and slope stability as necessary geologic hazards that must be considered simultaneously with other hazards.
- **A Noise Element**, which shall recognize guidelines adopted by the Office of Noise Control pursuant to Section 39850.1 of the Health and Safety Code, and which quantifies the community noise environment in terms of noise exposure contours for both near and long-term levels of growth and traffic activity.
- **A Scenic Highway Element** for the development, establishment, and protection of scenic highways pursuant to the provisions of Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 260) of Chapter 2 of Division 1 of the Streets and Highways Code.

In San Diego, a Transportation Element was developed combining the Noise, Circulation and Scenic Highway Elements. The Safety Element has been incorporated into the discussion of Public Facilities and Services. The Land Use Element is graphically represented as the General Plan Map which is discussed at the end of this document. Eight optional elements are also included.

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\*\* Section 65302 of the Government Code of the state of California.

- **A Redevelopment Element**, concerned with the restoration on either a single piece of property or a collective unit of properties to a condition of physical, social, and economic vitality. Redevelopment means the replanning, redesign, and in some cases clearance, reconstruction and rehabilitation of areas that have been determined to be blighted. In recent years the emphasis of redevelopment has shifted from the "urban renewal" concept of total land clearance to a concept which emphasizes conservation and rehabilitation with only selective clearance.
- **A Cultural Resources Management Element**, to develop an inventory of cultural resources and create a comprehensive program for historic and archaeological preservation.
- **An Urban Design Element**, to deal with the preservation, rehabilitation, and reuse of existing man-made facilities as well as the integration of new development with the natural landscape or within the framework of an existing community, with minimum impact on that community's physical and social assets.
- **An Energy Conservation Element**, to recognize the City's potential impact and influence on energy consumption patterns through its policies and decisions concerning air quality, growth, transportation, and residential densities. The element documents local supply and demand, utilization patterns and conservation, as well as alternative energy sources such as solid waste conversion.
- **A Recreation Element**, for the development of standards for public recreational facilities, including population based parks, resource based parks, and facilities such as sports fields and concourses.
- **An Industrial Element**, to establish the goals and standards and recommendations for San Diego's industrial development, in recognition of the fact that the land allocations needed for industry are preceded in importance only by the allocations for conservation and open space.
- **A Commercial Element**, to guide the location, timing and quality of future commercial development in new and built-up areas of the City.
- **A Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element**, to prepare for the provision of services where and when needed. The services covered include those that are publicly managed; schools, libraries, police, fire, water, sanitation (liquid and solid wastes), and flood control. Safety is discussed in appropriate areas under the various services.

Specifically, the General Plan sets forth goals and objectives for the development of San Diego to the year 1995. It establishes the amount of land needed for various uses, and designates general locations for these uses while relating each to the other. It projects the transportation networks necessary to link all future facilities and to permit them to function efficiently. Finally, it enunciates recommendations and measures for achieving General Plan goals and objectives. A variety of other agencies and jurisdictions affect the preparation and implementation of the General Plan. Among the more important levels of influence aside from the state planning and zoning law are:

- 1) The California Coastal Act of 1976, which mandates that all designated coastal regions develop local coastal plans consistent with city and regional plans;
- 2) The state of California's urban strategy, which is a partial update of the mandated environmental goals and policy report that is intended to articulate the state's policies on growth, development, and environmental quality, and recommend state, local and private actions needed to carry out these policies;
- 3) The county of San Diego, which designs, controls and implements a variety of programs for the unincorporated regions of the county; and
- 4) The Comprehensive Planning Organization (the San Diego regional COG, or Council of Governments), which through its comprehensive plan for the San Diego region has developed a Regional Energy Plan, a Regional Air Quality Strategy, a Growth Management Strategy, a Regional Transportation Plan and an area-wide Water Quality Management Plan.

Additionally, the San Diego Unified Port District has the responsibility for the policies regarding operation and use of the City's harbor and major airport and the Metropolitan Transit Development Board has the responsibility for planning, constructing and operating a fixed rail guideway system for the San Diego region.

Individual elements detail the requirements and policies of these varied levels of influence that affect the particular strategies for the City of San Diego.

There is a compelling injunction that we prepare plans which will make the best use of our physical and human resources. The earth's continuing population explosion reminds us ever more forcefully that land is indeed a limited resource. As land shrinks in supply, and as urbanization and interdependent living proceed apace, a vital community must concern itself with the use of this resource. It becomes a legitimate public issue that the most efficient, balanced combination of land uses be achieved from among the innumerable alternative land use configuration.

Preparation of the General Plan is based on the logical premise that if a city knows where it wants to go, it possesses a far better prospect of getting there. The General Plan attempts to synthesize diverse efforts in order to determine rational and complementary development goals for the future.

The General Plan approach is essential to successful community problem-solving efforts. Experience has demonstrated that many problem areas in San Diego cannot be treated effectively by particularized or localized planning programs and solutions.

The General Plan provides a comprehensive framework which permits recognition of the relationships between seemingly diverse development goals and problems, and establishes a meaningful basis for the resolution of conflicts.

The General Plan, once adopted, is by no means a fixed, static document that is unyielding to change. State law provides that the General Plan can be amended, but no more than three times during any calendar year. This provision applies only to mandatory elements.

Amending the General Plan requires successive affirmative votes by both the Planning Commission and City Council, provided that each body has first conducted at least one public hearing on the proposed change or changes. However, the City Council is not precluded from amending the plan by a failure to act on the part of the Planning Commission.\*

### **How the Plan is Used**

The General Plan embodies authoritative City goals and policies relating to the growth and development of San Diego. As such, the plan will function as the master yardstick for evaluating all significant future development proposals of both government and private enterprise.

More specifically, the General Plan will render invaluable service to both the Planning Commission and City Council by providing essential background and perspective for decision making in respect to zoning, land subdivisions, and related matters. It will materially facilitate the work of the City Council in its deliberations on public investments, public land policies, capital improvement programs, and other vital fiscal considerations.

To businessmen, investors, and developers, the General Plan will provide guidance as to city development policies and the future direction, pace, and intensity of San Diego's growth. It will assist utilities and all governmental and semipublic agencies in establishing appropriate development policies and programs and in coordinating their own planning activities.

To the community at large, the General Plan, if properly implemented, will provide environmental stability and assurances; assurances that land use conflicts between business, industry, and residences will be resolved if not avoided; that misuses of land will not occur; that traffic congestion will be minimized or averted; that parks and other community facilities will be located where people can best use them; and that the City's growth will proceed in a rational, orderly manner.

The General Plan establishes a framework for the development of more specific community plans by identifying and locating those facilities which possess citywide or intercommunity importance. Moreover, the General Plan provides goals, standards, and criteria relating to the need for, and the location of, such essentially intracommunity facilities as neighborhood centers, neighborhood parks, and elementary schools. Within this framework of "fixes" and guides offered by the General Plan, community plans are appropriately evolved.

The General Plan reflects the major proposals contained within community or subarea plans adopted by the City Council. However, the General Plan should in no way be considered as a replacement for previously adopted and future community plans. Such plans must remain as official guidelines for the development of communities and subareas and act as supplements to

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\* Sections 65350-61 inclusive, of the Government Code of the state of California.

the General Plan with regard to the more specific proposals and programs normally associated with community plans.

In the future it must be anticipated that the intensive studies of local conditions typically undertaken as part of the community planning process may well suggest significant changes from, or additions to, the General Plan. Changes or additions which relate to intracommunity matters, or which do not conflict seriously with the General Plan's citywide proposals, should prevail upon official adoption of the community plan. On the other hand, where a proposed community plan would appear to conflict significantly in respect to matters which transcend the community's limits in their influence, revision of the General Plan should be considered simultaneously with adoption of the community plan by both Planning Commission and City Council, whenever possible. In this way, conflict may be resolved and consistency between the General Plan and community plans retained.

For all San Diegans, the General Plan should be instrumental in securing by 1995 an efficient, handsome, and exciting City possessed of an attractive environment for living.

### **General Plan Scope**

An important aspect of the General Plan relates to its scope and application. In this regard, there was a determination that the objectives, standards, and recommendations of the plan would pertain only to the City of San Diego. For the purposes of the General Plan, however, studies were directed to the San Diego metropolitan area bordered on the north by census tract boundaries running easterly from Batiquitos Lagoon to the northerly limits of the City of San Diego; on the east by the foothills of the Peninsular Range and census tract boundaries related thereto; on the south by the republic of Mexico; and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. Within this area of approximately 750 square miles, the General Plan map indicates:

- Planning proposals for the City of San Diego.
- Those facilities existing or impending within neighboring cities and unincorporated county territory which have a clearly regional or quasi-regional character (and, therefore, a significant influence on the City of San Diego). Such facilities include industrial areas; regional commercial centers; regional or resource-based parks; freeways and major streets; educational institutions; and other major developments.
- Existing facilities in adjoining jurisdictions not of a regional or quasi-regional character where these are located on the very periphery of the City of San Diego and clearly bear relation to its planning.

It should be emphasized that the San Diego City General Plan was studied and prepared within the total metropolitan area context, and with an awareness of San Diego's preeminent role in such a context. Projections in this report are related to the City of San Diego and, where appropriate, to the metropolitan area. However, the General Plan is fundamentally a plan for the City of San Diego, and any efforts by neighboring jurisdictions to follow General Plan

objectives, standards, or proposals must be seen as purely discretionary acts on the part of those jurisdictions.

## **GOALS**

Prior to any consideration of individual elements, it is important to focus upon the General Plan for San Diego - 1995 as a totality - for it is much more than the sum of its parts. What, then, does the General Plan say when taken as a whole, and what does it mean? What are its central thrusts?

### **The Basic Goal**

The General Plan's basic goal is the **FOSTERING OF A PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT IN SAN DIEGO THAT WILL BE MOST CONGENIAL TO HEALTHY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**. Such a seemingly simple statement does not, of course, conceal the very difficult questions that quickly assert themselves; namely, what is "healthy human development?"; and what constitutes a "physical environment most congenial" to such development?

It cannot be assumed that the responses of San Diegans to these questions will be notable for their concurrence. Nor can it be assumed that the responses of any given individual would themselves remain unchanged over time. Consequently, it should be obvious that continuing research and inquiry into the evolving nature of the people's needs and desires are called for; and that the General Plan itself must be regularly reviewed and revised if it is to properly project for a dynamic, ever-changing San Diego.

### **Important Subgoals**

A number of important subgoals flow from the General Plan's basic goal enunciated above. Some of the more broadly relevant of these may be expressed as follows:

- **FOSTERING OF A PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT THAT ENABLES SAN DIEGO TO FULLY AND EFFICIENTLY PERFORM ITS INDICATED LOCAL, REGIONAL, STATE, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL ROLES.**

This subgoal contemplates that the City's land use and transportation patterns will be such as to facilitate its functioning as a municipality; as a regional center of political, economic, social, educational, cultural, and recreational activities; and as a state, national, and international center of commerce, tourism, medical research, oceanography, and military training.

- **FOSTERING OF A PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT THAT OFFERS SAN DIEGANS A WIDE RANGE OF LIFE STYLES.**

Within each community if possible, but certainly within the City as a whole, there should exist the opportunity for individuals to pursue an appreciable variety of life styles.

Meaningful alternatives should be clearly available with respect to housing, employment, education, culture, and recreation.

- FOSTERING OF A PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO THE INDIVIDUAL'S PSYCHOLOGICAL, AESTHETIC, AND PHYSICAL NEEDS.

San Diego's development should be coherent in form and comprehensible in total extent. Each constituent community should likewise possess spatial coherency, as well as a distinctive physical identity. Additionally, the City's overall physical aspect should be satisfying to the senses and elevating to the human spirit.

- ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PLANNED ENVIRONMENT THROUGH EFFICIENT USE OF THE CITY'S LAND AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES SO AS TO MAXIMIZE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTAL OPTIONS.

This subgoal necessitates a phased, incremental absorption of the City's remaining land resources so as to retain substantial tracts in an undeveloped and, therefore, uncommitted status. To the extent that such a program is successfully adhered to, the City will be enabled to maximize its capability for accommodating future land use needs

- CONSERVATION OF AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS IN HARMONY WITH NATURE AND RETAINS STRONG LINKAGES WITH IT.

Concern for the wellbeing of present San Diegans and the obligation borne to future San Diegans dictate that this City be maintained as a habitable place possessed of the positive natural attributes and resources that compose its essence. Among other things, this requires that the generation of wastes and other pollutants be kept well within the absorptive capacities of the environment.

- EVOLVEMENT OF A LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE AND PROCESS THAT PROMOTES CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE DETERMINATION OF PUBLIC POLICY, AND ALSO FACILITATES THE EFFICIENT SOLUTION OF PUBLIC PROBLEMS.

This subgoal comprehends the strength of the interdependencies linking the area's separate jurisdictions, and the correspondingly great need to effect a coordination of efforts in attacking and solving shared problems. There is an implicit awareness of the high potential that every jurisdiction has for frustrating the rational planning and development of its neighbors, if not the entire region.

### **Environmental Setting**

The San Diego metropolitan area is bounded approximately by Escondido on the north, the foothills of the coastal mountains on the east, the Mexican border on the south, and the Pacific Ocean on the west. Geographically, the metropolitan area consists of a complex topographic succession ranging from a broad coastal plain dissected by local streams, and extending from the

Pacific Ocean to about 10-15 miles inland. The foothills provide a transition to the mountain and valley topography of the eastern county. Erosion-resistant formations give rise to the prominent mesa topography dominant between the San Diego River and the San Dieguito River. The geological formations are disturbed by faults. Two potentially active fault systems lie within the metropolitan area: the La Nacion Fault and the Rose Canyon Fault, which may be connected to recently active faults in the Baja California area.

The climate of the region is a Mediterranean-type, characterized by moderate temperatures, with annual and diurnal temperature variations of less than 15 degrees Fahrenheit from the average of 61 degrees. Climatic zones closely correspond to the topographic zones: coastal, coastal hills, foothills and mountains. The interaction of the topographic/geologic and climatic systems has resulted in a broad range of soil types occurring within the region which in turn supports many vegetation associations, including coastal scrub, grasslands, oak woodland, chaparral, and riparian types. Human activities have modified many of these plant communities and replaced the native vegetation with agricultural species and urban development in many areas. The surviving natural and naturalized plant communities support a wide range of wildlife throughout the region.

The San Diego metropolitan area contains portions of several drainage basins and several reservoirs. However, most of the water supplied to the region is currently imported from the Colorado River via aqueducts. The surface streams in the region are predominantly intermittent, flowing only during periods of high rainfall. Much of the area is steeply sloped, leading to potentially high rainfall run-off rates and flood hazards as well as landslide hazards.

The region's water quality is best described as poor, with urban and agricultural runoff, high salt content of imported waters, and other sources of pollution gradually degrading the quality of existing waters within the region. The coastal waters are of relatively high quality, with almost all sewerage receiving treatment prior to ocean disposal. Air quality is similarly degraded, with current levels of pollution exceeding state and federal ambient air quality standards. These pollutants are generated by process losses (e.g., dry cleaning), motor vehicles, aircraft, combustion (e.g., electrical generation), military operations (e.g., ships) and other miscellaneous activities. The San Diego Air Basin is strongly affected by the interaction of the high mountains to the east, weak on-shore winds during much of the year, and a meteorological condition known as a temperature inversion, which acts like a lid on the air basin, reducing the normal mixing and dispersion capabilities of the atmosphere. As a result, pollutants from the Los Angeles/Orange county area and occasionally from the Tijuana area, drift into the San Diego Air Basin.

## **Historic Development**

Before the coming of the Spanish in the late 1700s, the landscape of what is now San Diego was little affected by human occupancy. Diegueno Indians were hunters and gatherers and had no significant agriculture and relatively few permanent structures. There are few remaining visible remnants of this period other than artifacts identified through archaeological investigation. River valleys and coastal areas have a higher incidence of such remnants than most other areas of the City. The Spanish period (1769-1822) yielded a few enduring structures, the restored mission

and Padre Dam being the notable landscape features from this era. During the Mexican period (1822-1848), Old Town began to grow. Some of these structures still exist in a restored state.

From 1850 to 1880 was a transitional period; Old Town blossomed and grew, only to be deserted for Alonso Morton's New Town (now downtown San Diego). Remnants of this era can be found in both areas, Old Town containing the densely packed distribution of examples from this period. By the 1870s, development had shifted south to the New Town. Large scale downtown urbanization began with the boom of the 1880s during which much of the waterfront was filled in and piers and waterhouses were constructed. By the 1890s, San Diego began to have the structure and organization of a typical American city complete with a downtown commercial section, residential hills, and a busy industrial waterfront. Much of this era still exists in the urban landscape of Centre City, Uptown, and the Golden Hills area. There are several examples of early commercial buildings in the lower Fifth Avenue area, many of which have been declared San Diego historical sites.

During the Victorian period (1880-1905) residential areas to the north and east also thrived; Uptown, the area north of downtown, roughly bounded by Ash Street to the south, Balboa Park to the east. Walnut Street to the north, and Interstate 5 (I-5) to the west, began to urbanize in 1888. Many elaborate mansions and other Victorian structures from this era still remain, including several historic sites. Golden Hills, the area just to the east of downtown bounded by Balboa Park on the north, I-5 on the west, Commercial Street on the south, and 30<sup>th</sup> Street on the east, is another area where significant Victorian structures remain. Villa Montezuma (the Jesse Shephard house), perhaps San Diego's finest monument to Victorian residential architecture, is located in the southern section of Golden Hills at 20<sup>th</sup> and K Street. Important structures were built in other areas within the current San Diego City boundaries during the Victorian era, and a few remain in areas such as Pacific Beach, East San Diego and La Jolla. Perhaps the finest Victorian structure on the west coast, the Hotel del Coronado, was one of several Victorian beach hotels, the rest of which are now gone. Balboa Park began to emerge from its "untouched" condition in 1892 when the City leased 30 acres in the northwest corner to Kate Sessions for a nursery.

The next 25 years (1905-1930) was notable for the Mediterranean and Hispanic influence in architecture. The Panama Pacific Exposition of 1915 had perhaps the greatest impact on this new era; a Spanish-Moroccan-Italian cityscape evolved. Balboa Park was transformed into a magnificent "Spanish" city, as the Prado, now an historic site, was constructed.

During this period the Santa Fe Station was rebuilt in the Mission Revival style. An important residential influence resulted from the work of architect Irving Gill, who developed a stucco style incorporating some Mediterranean influences along with a large degree of functionalism. Most of Gill's houses (built between 1905 and 1915) are in the Uptown area. During the 1920s the Spanish colonial residential style became popular and the new "suburbs" such as Mission Hills and Kensington were developed. Downtown at this time experienced a development of eastern style office buildings, some modeled after Florentine palaces and Spanish towers. Other downtown buildings, such as elaborate theaters, further carried out the Mediterranean theme. The period 1930-1950 saw the advent of "streamlined modern" as an influence. The Ford Building (1935) is the only historic site from this era, although this influence is visible in the

rounded corners and modernistic styling of other structures built at that time. During the 1940s, military housing was built in the Linda Vista and Rosecrans areas, as were an increasing number of apartments in many areas. Large factories and military buildings made a big impact on the cityscape during World War II. During the years since 1950, suburban San Diego has experienced large scale urbanization characterized by several trends. These include large tract housing developments, mobile homes, condominiums, and an increase in construction of all types of apartments, shopping centers, and office buildings.

## **San Diego Today:**

### **A Socio-Economic Profile**

*(This section was revised and adopted December 13, 1983, Resolution R-259840.)*

### **Existing Land Use**

As of July 1, 1983, the City of San Diego's corporate limits contained 206,989 acres of land area (323.4 square miles). Considering San Diego's vast area, it is not surprising that only 62 percent of its land is developed. The breakdown of the developed portion of the City, shown in Table 1, reflects the enormously disproportionate importance of "public and semipublic" uses, primarily military installations and large regional parks.

### **Population**

A city is primarily an aggregation of people who are collectively termed its "population." The size, distribution and characteristics of the population are fundamental factors in planning any city's future. Population data are essential in the planning of residential, commercial and industrial areas, in the designing of the transportation system, and in the location of community facilities.

For analytical and projective purposes it is useful to study San Diego's population against the backdrop of the entire county and the metropolitan area. In April 1980, the metropolitan area contained a population of 1,476,400, reflecting an increase of 1,000,556 during the preceding 30 years. Yet, impressive as this growth was, its rate failed to match that of the county; for the metropolitan area's percentage of total county population actually declined from 85.5 percent in 1950 to 79.3 percent in 1980.

Looking to the future, it is anticipated that the average numerical increase of approximately 33,350 per year experienced by the metropolitan area for the 30 years between 1950 and 1980 will not continue through the year 2000, but that the metropolitan area's growth will drop to about 25,585 per year for the next 20 years. It is further anticipated that the metropolitan area's share of the total county population will continue to decline. Thus, for the year 2000 the projected metropolitan area population of 1,988,100 would be 73.7 percent of the county figure of 2,699,200.

The City of San Diego is the nation's seventh largest city based upon its population of 929,000 as of July 1, 1983. As seen from Table 2 it is projected that the City's population for the year 2000

will be 1,140,900. In relation to the San Diego metropolitan area, the City's population share will continue to decline, from 59 percent in 1980 to 57 percent in the year 2000.

Distribution of the projected year 2000 population is portrayed on Table 4. The "Study Areas" listed in the table do not coincide with planning area boundaries, but they represent convenient delineations for forecasting purposes based on census tract boundaries. In making forecasts, the existing development for each study area was analyzed, as well as its potential for development and population growth, to the year 2000 in terms of residential density standards recommended by the plan. In the City's central area, the forecast was influenced by the basic assumption that older, single-family residences would gradually be replaced by multiple-family dwellings. Such factors as existing subdivision characteristics, availability of utilities and access roads, and topographic limitations were considered in forecasting for the outlying areas.

### **Issues**

Over the past few years, three major issues have surfaced in relation to public concern over the future of San Diego. These are the interrelated issues of growth, density and development patterns, and environmental protection.

As a result of such concerns, a comprehensive strategy has been developed which provides a framework for deciding some of the questions that result when considering these issues. The General Plan assumes that all land use decisions ultimately involve a trade-off of desirable goals, and therefore attempts to balance the major concerns by working toward an urban environment that meets the needs of the majority of the City's residents. The "Guidelines for Future Development" section represents a continuing and committed effort on the part of the City to further identify and resolve the issues that face us.

TABLE 1  
Land Use in City of San Diego by Major Classes  
July 1, 1983

| Land Use Category       | Areas in Acres | Percent of Total City Area | Percent of Total Developed Developed Area |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|---|
| Residential             | 41,048         | 19.8                       | 31.8                                      |
| Commercial              | 6,048          | 2.9                        | 4.7                                       |
| Industrial              | 6,912          | 3.3                        | 5.4                                       |
| Public and Semipublic   | 48,840         | 23.6                       | 37.9                                      |
| Streets and Highways    | 26,013         | 12.6                       | 20.2                                      |
| Subtotal Developed Area | 128,861        | 62.2                       | 100.0                                     |
| Agricultural and Vacant | 78,128         | 37.8                       | ---                                       |
| Total City Area         | 206,989        | 100.0                      | ---                                       |

Source: *City of San Diego Land Use Inventory, July 1983.*

TABLE 2  
Population of San Diego County and Subareas  
1980 and 2000

| Areas                | 1980 CENSUS |                   | 2000 PROJECTION |                   | CHANGE 1980 TO 2000 |                |                   |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|
|                      | Population  | Percent of County | Population      | Percent of County | Number              | Percent Change | Percent of County |
| San Diego County     | 1,861,800   | 100.0             | 2,699,200       | 100.0             | 837,400             | 45.0           | 100.0             |
| Metropolitan Area    | 1,476,400   | 79.3              | 1,988,100       | 73.7              | 511,700             | 34.7           | 61.1              |
| City of San Diego    | 875,500     | 47.0              | 1,140,900       | 42.3              | 265,400             | 30.3           | 31.7              |
| Other                | 600,900     | 32.3              | 847,200         | 31.4              | 246,300             | 41.0           | 29.4              |
| Nonmetropolitan Area | 385,400     | 20.7              | 711,100         | 26.3              | 325,700             | 84.5           | 38.9              |
| North Coast          | 334,400     | 18.0              | 612,800         | 22.7              | 278,400             | 83.3           | 33.2              |
| Inland               | 51,100      | 2.7               | 98,300          | 3.6               | 47,200              | 92.4           | 5.6               |

Sources: *U.S. Census data. Projections derived in part from State of California Department of Finance Report 83, P-1 "Projected Total Population of California Counties; July 1, 1980 to July 1, 2020," (report dated September 1983); in part from Series 6 Population Forecasts prepared by the San Diego Association of Governments.*

TABLE 3  
Population of City of San Diego and Related Areas  
1900-2000

| Year        | City of San Diego | San Diego Metro Area | County of San Diego | Southern California | State of California |
|-------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1900        | 17,700            | n/a                  | 35,090              | 304,211             | 1,485,053           |
| 1910        | 39,578            | n/a                  | 61,665              | 751,310             | 2,377,549           |
| 1920        | 74,361            | n/a                  | 112,248             | 1,346,963           | 3,426,861           |
| 1930        | 147,995           | 182,070              | 209,659             | 2,912,795           | 5,677,251           |
| 1940        | 203,341           | 253,645              | 289,348             | 3,672,363           | 6,907,387           |
| 1950        | 334,387           | 475,844              | 556,808             | 5,652,249           | 10,586,223          |
| 1960        | 573,224           | 885,447              | 1,033,011           | 9,025,694           | 15,717,204          |
| 1970        | 697,471           | 1,137,564            | 1,357,854           | 11,668,707          | 19,953,134          |
| 1980        | 875,538           | 1,476,400            | 1,861,846           | 13,748,822          | 23,668,562          |
| Projections |                   |                      |                     |                     |                     |
| 1985        | 960,000           | n/a                  | 2,082,800           | 15,075,500          | 25,998,000          |
| 1990        | 1,029,600         | 1,773,400            | 2,335,000           | 16,192,500          | 27,990,000          |
| 1995        | 1,085,500         | 1,891,100            | 2,526,900           | 17,206,500          | 29,820,000          |
| 2000        | 1,140,900         | 1,988,100            | 2,699,200           | 18,080,800          | 31,414,000          |

*n/a – Not Applicable*

*Include San Diego, Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara Counties.*

*Sources :U.S. Census data. Projections derived in part from State of California Department of Finance Report 83, P-1 "Projected Total Population of California Counties; July 1, 1980 to July 1, 2020," (report dated September 1983); in part from Series 6 Population Forecasts prepared by the San Diego Association of Governments.*

Table 4  
City of San Diego Population by Study Areas  
1980 - 2000

| Area Name       | 1980 Census | Change<br>1980 to<br>1985 | 1985    | Change<br>1985 to<br>1990 | 1990      | Change<br>1990 to<br>1995 | 1995      | Change<br>1995 to<br>2000 | 2000      | Change<br>1980 to 2000 |         |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------|---------|---------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|------------------------|---------|
|                 |             |                           |         |                           |           |                           |           |                           |           | Number                 | Percent |
| Central         | 117,427     | 12,873                    | 130,300 | 2,000                     | 132,300   | ---                       | 132,300   | -800                      | 131,500   | 14,073                 | 12.0%   |
| Coastal         | 165,814     | 8,286                     | 174,100 | -2,500                    | 171,600   | -3,800                    | 167,800   | -4,100                    | 163,700   | -2,114                 | -1.3%   |
| Eastern         | 287,234     | 25,666                    | 312,900 | 7,300                     | 320,200   | -3,600                    | 316,600   | -8,300                    | 308,300   | 21,066                 | 7.3%    |
| Kearny Mesa     | 157,042     | 13,358                    | 170,400 | 5,500                     | 175,900   | 3,600                     | 179,500   | 2,100                     | 181,600   | 24,558                 | 15.6%   |
| North San Diego | 90,092      | 18,708                    | 108,800 | 41,700                    | 150,500   | 39,900                    | 190,400   | 49,000                    | 239,400   | 149,308                | 165.7%  |
| South San Diego | 57,929      | 5,571                     | 63,500  | 15,600                    | 79,100    | 19,800                    | 98,900    | 17,500                    | 116,400   | 58,471                 | 100.9%  |
| Entire City     | 875,538     | 84,462                    | 960,000 | 69,600                    | 1,029,600 | 55,900                    | 1,085,500 | 55,400                    | 1,140,900 | 265,362                | 30.3%   |

*Source: Series 6 Population Forecasts prepared by the San Diego Association of Governments and the City of San Diego City Planning Department*